

To: Julie Kies  
From: Rob Ethridge  
Subject: Biomass BMP Status Idaho and Oregon  
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I talked with Craig Foss from IDL on their biomass program and BMP efforts. The basis for the IDL biomass program has been the Fuels For Schools program. That is winding down due to loss of funding. Idaho received several million in ARRA biomass dollars which went directly from the USFS to industry for developing cogen facilities or to Idaho Department of Energy for similar projects. I did not get any additional information on those efforts. They do have one cogen sawmill in Plummer that is online with cogen and electricity delivery to the grid. They have had interest from larger companies who want to develop larger, 50 meg+, facilities. They have the same issues we do in that the companies want guaranteed 15 year supply. IDL Trust Lands cannot deliver because their trust mandates cannot support that type of long term price commitments. They have the same issues we do with FS lands and supply. Idaho does have a Biomass Working Group(s) set up. In the last year they have decentralized their single Working Group into, as of now, 5 localized working group, each tackling local issues and objectives. There is still one statewide group that works and makes recommendations to the Legislature. There has been much discussion but to date no legislation or funding.

As far as BMP's go, Idaho has a forest practices act and a slash law, which they feel adequately cover the amount of biomass activity so far. The Idaho laws are set up such that their Fire program oversees monitoring logging slash created through commercial operations where products are sold to log mills. Their Forest Practices programs cover slash generated from non-commercial operations. This has created some disagreement over who would monitor or be responsible for biomass operation not tied to commercial operations where products are not delivered to log mills. This has not been an issue to date because there have been no purely biomass projects to date.

I talked with Joe Misek from Oregon Department of Forestry on their biomass utilization program and their assessments of the environmental impacts of biomass utilization.

In 2005, in response to the growing number of large fires the Oregon Legislature passed SB 1072. A part of that bill directed the Department of Forestry to establish a working group to further forest health and investigate and evaluate woody biomass utilization opportunities. That group, the Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group began to meet in October 2006, and worked to develop a January 2007 report containing recommendations to further biomass utilization. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) was also asked to report back every three years to legislature on the effects of biomass utilization (positive and negative).

Biomass utilization has seen slow growth in Oregon, much like elsewhere in the nation. While the 2007 Oregon Legislature passed some significant incentives, and some investments were made, others interested in investing in biomass plants were left waiting for the extension of the federal production tax credit. About the time the federal credit was extended the economy declined (worldwide) and money to lend for energy projects became very tight. Interest in several of these projects seems to be now reemerging.

Much of the initial emphasis of the Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group was promoting increased biomass utilization mainly through combined heat and power (CHP) plants, promotion of biofuels research, and education and outreach efforts. Current efforts of the group also include expanding thermal heat opportunities where they make economic sense across the state. The Enterprise school now heats with an efficient wood boiler system and Oregon Department of Energy is also working with several other schools across the state interested in converting to wood boilers. Several state and federal buildings are now or are in the process of converting to thermal heat with efficient wood boilers.

As far as effects of biomass utilization in Oregon and BMPs go, in the 2008 report to the Legislature ODF found their existing Oregon Forest Practices Act provided adequate protections during biomass harvesting operations. The Department will continue to evaluate the adequacy of the Oregon Forest Practices Act as woody biomass utilization increases over time and future reports are submitted. For additional information on Oregon's biomass program see: <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/RENEW/Biomass/BiomassHome.shtml>